MEMORIAL

OF THE

REV. WM. CHAUNCY LANGDON,

ON THE SUBJECT OF THE

ITALIAN REFORM MOVEMENT.

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To the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

The undersigned being generally acquainted with the facts submitted in the Memorial of the Rev. Wm Chauncy Langdon, upon the subject of the Reform Movement in the Church of Italy, respectfully and cordially unite in commending the subject to the earnest attention and consideration of the General Convention.

PHILAD'A., *Oct.* 6, 1865.

WILLIAM ROLLINSON WHITTINGHAM,
Bishop of Maryland.
WILLIAM BACON STEVENS,
Bishop of Pennsylvania.
A. CLEVELAND COXE,
Bishop of Western New York.
WILLIAM INGRAHAM KIP,
Bishop of California.
C. T. QUINTARD,
Rector of Church of Advent, Nashville, Tenn.
FRANCIS VINTON, D.D.,
Assistant Minister, Trinity Church, New York.
HENRY M. MASON, D.D.,
House of Deputies, from Maryland.
C. E. SWOPE,
Rector of Trinity Church, Pittsburgh, Penna.
WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D.,
Prof. of Systematic Theology, Nashotah, Wis.
ROBERT LLOYD GOLDSBOROUGH,
House of Deputies, from Delaware.
JOHN HENRY HOBART, D.D.,
Rector of Grace Church, Baltimore.
JACOB L. CLARK, D.D.,
Rector of St. John's Church, Waterbury, Conn.
CHARLES W. RANKIN,
Rector of St. Luke's Church, Baltimore.
GEORGE D. CUMMINS, D.D.,
Rector of Trinity Church, Chicago.
SAMUEL D. DENISON,
Secretary of Foreign Committee Board of Missions.
J. DIXON CARDER, D.D.,
Secretary of Domestic Committee Board of Missions.
M. MAHAN, D.D.,
Rector of St. Paul's Church, Baltimore.
J. H. HOPKINS, JR.
NOAH HUNT SCHENCK, D.D.,
Rector of Emmanuel Church, Baltimore.
ROBERT H. CLARKSON, D.D.,
Rector of St. James' Church, Chicago.
WILLIAM STEVENS PERRY,
Rector of St. Michael's Church, Litchfield, Conn.
A. N. LITTLEJOHN, D.D.,
Rector of Holy Trinity Church, Brooklyn.
M. A. DEWOLFE HOWE, D.D.,
Rector of St. Luke's Church, Philadelphia.
JOHN N. NORTON, D.D.,
Rector of Church of Ascension, Frankfort, Ky.

Received in General Convention and referred to Special Committees:

IN THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS—CONSISTING OF—

RT. REV. BISHOPS WHITTINGHAM, ATKINSON, KIP, STEVENS and COXE;

IN THE HOUSE OF CLERICAL AND LAY DEPUTIES—CONSISTING OF

REV. DRS. HIGBEE, of N. Y., WHARTON, of Mass., MAHAN, of Md., NORTON, of Ky. and CUMMINS, of Ill., and Messrs. RUGGLES, of N. Y., HUNTINGTON, of Conn., CHAMBERS, of Md. and HUNT, of W. N. Y.

To the Rt. Rev. the Bishops, and to the Reverend, the Clerical and the Lay Deputies of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, in General Convention assembled, the Memorial of the Rev. Wm. Chauncy Langdon, a Presbyter of the Diocese of Maryland, is humbly submitted.

TO THE RT. REV. FATHERS, REV. AND RESPECTED BRETHREN:

YOUR memorialist ventures to approach you in behalf of certain priests and others of the Church of Italy, who are seeking to procure such a reform in that Church, as shall restore it to the condition of its primitive purity in doctrine, discipline and worship.

It would have been more accordant with the feelings of your memorialist, to leave it to others possessed of a better claim upon your attention, to ask your sympathy and active interest in the present religious condition of Italy. In default, however, of the action of others, he trusts that the relations in which he has providentially been placed to this movement, will be held his sufficient excuse, if he is thought to presume. Being in Italy at the time in charge of the American Episcopal congregation at Rome, it was his privilege to be personally cognizant of some of the earliest phases of the reform movement, and to meet with some of those prominently identified therewith; he has since continued in communication both with some of the leading reformers and with those clergymen of the Church of England who have shown an active sympathy with their aims; and, finally, to him as a member of the American Church, have lately been addressed, both by Italian and by English Churchmen, expressions of earnest desire that our Church should extend the hand of fraternal sympathy and counsel to those who are thus seeking to obtain "like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

It is now well known that about ten thousand Italian priests and ecclesiastics of various ranks, both secular and regular, early in 1862 united with Carlo Passaglia—confessedly the ablest living theologian of his church—in signing a memorial to the Pope, praying him to renounce his temporal power in favor of the new kingdom of Italy. The papal excommunication which has fallen upon, and been disregarded by Passaglia and his followers alike, has placed them in the position of a reform party; but their aims have thus far been confined to political rather than to strictly religious ends—to the reform of the *Papacy* rather than to a reform of the *Church*. With this party, therefore—however we may rejoice in the advance which it has made, and whatever hopes we may cherish for its future—our Church can, as yet, have but little practically in common.

It is also known to many that there have sprung up in almost every part of the Italian kingdom, little bands of separatists, who, partly impelled by an earnest conviction of the corruptions of Romanism, and by an earnest zeal for that knowledge of Bible truth of which they had hitherto been deprived; and, partly influenced by foreign missionaries or agencies from the Waldenses or from divers societies of England, Scotland, France, Switzerland, and America, have sought to inaugurate ultra-Protestant Congregationalism in the breaches of the historic Church of Italy. These separatists, as individuals, have undoubted claims upon our sympathy, and their motives are entitled to our respect; but, since throughout all their various scattered organizations and diverse religious teaching, they agree chiefly in the rejection of an Episcopal ministry and government, and in the attempt to identify their movement with a rigidly fixed system of metaphysical theology, it is presumed that formal relations with them would neither be found practicable nor be deemed expedient by the Church.

But there are also a large number of Italian priests and ecclesiastics who are fervently hoping and seeking the reformation of their National Church. While they do not feel justified in separating themselves from its communion, nor, in a majority of instances, do they as yet clearly perceive the goal toward which they are aiming, yet they frankly admit the corruptions of their Church and its wide departure from its primitive state; and they are striving at once to inform themselves as to the extent of those corruptions, and to pave the way for the reform of the Church of Italy. In other words, they are endeavoring to ascertain the line which, in the actual Church, separates that which is Romish from that which is Catholic, and while they preserve the latter, to free their Church from the former.

Of these priests, nearly one thousand have united themselves with over eight hundred laymen—senators, deputies, professional men, and others—in a "*Societa Emancipatrice del Sacerdozio Italiano*," for this object definitely and frankly avowed. This Society, whose center is in Naples, has now been four years in existence; and its President, the Rev. Dr. Luigi Prota, an ex-Dominican Friar, and his co-laborers, have, from the first, published a journal, *L'Emancipatore Cattolico*, as the organ of the Society and the agency for disseminating its views.

Others seem to regard themselves as, in some respects, already practically emancipated from the corrupt bondage of the Church; and, in Messina, some indeed have in their ser-

vices gone so far as to substitute, for their own, an Italian translation of the English liturgy.

But many, who would otherwise unite with this Society, are deterred from doing so by the ecclesiastical consequences with which it would be visited; while far the larger proportion of this class of ecclesiastics are by no means ready to take so decided a step. Yet even these, as a general thing, cordially recognize the catholicity of the Anglican Church, and are quite ready to greet and to counsel with her clergy of either branch, as well as to accept and read such writings of Anglican divines as may be offered them. In fact, their position is fairly indicated by the name and design of a monthly perodical—*L'Esaminatore*—which has been published at Florence, in their interest, for nearly two years past. This journal has, under the editorship of Professor Stanislao Bianciardi, been devoted to the full and honest discussion of questions connected with such a proposed reform of the Church.

Your memorialist will not dwell in detail upon the attitude of these reformers, nor upon the testimony which these journals furnish to the character of the reform element in the Church, of which they are the exponents. Numbers of *L'Emancipatore Cattolico* and files of *L'Esaminatore*, are in the hands of members of the Convention. Suffice it to say that the position of this class of ecclesiastics is substantially the same as that occupied, and their aims the same as those proposed during the reign of Henry VIII. by the English reformers, to which the Anglical Church afterwards owed, under God, the recovery of her spiritual heritage. Indeed, one of our own Bishops has expressed the opinion that this reform movement in Italy is to-day *more* advanced than was that of England at the accession of Edward VI.

In this field, the importance of whose promise it is impossible fully to estimate, our Church *alone* among Protestant communions, of almost every name and nation, is not represented.

The Waldenses have made missionary labors throughout the Italian peninsula the special object of their most strenuous efforts. They have established a Theological Seminary at Florence to train students for this purpose, and have set about the evangelization of Italy, as though it were the one great end for which they have been so strangely preserved and perpetuated to the present age. The French and Swiss Protestants have organized a society at Geneva, from which agents are sent out to labor, and by which publications are issued and distributed with unflagging zeal. The Free Kirk of Scotland has early been represented among the Italian separatists, and has ever since continually multiplied the men and the means

devoted to the extension of this theory of reform. The various dissenting communions of England—especially the sect of Plymouth Brethren—have shown equal zeal and liberality in the same cause; and the statement has lately been made, that they, together with the Scotch Free Kirk, raise yearly the sum of $75,000 for their missions in Italy, of which one-third is furnished by the English Methodists alone. And, finally, although your memorialist is unable to say to what amount, yet it is well known that the non-Episcopal denominations of the United States which are represented by the American and Foreign Christian Union, have largely contributed means to this end, have sent out agents to various parts of Italy, and are now training at the Waldensian Seminary at Florence, special American missionaries to engage in the proselyting evangelization of that land.

And all this is done for a policy essentially and thoroughly *un-Italian*, and which, therefore, cannot succeed; and whose only practical result will be to weaken, obstruct, and endanger a genuine reformation of the Church itself.

On the other hand, English Churchmen have earnestly and wisely manifested their sympathy with the aims of that class of priests and others who are seeking an internal and organic primitive reform, and have lent their aid to them in their efforts to pursue this policy.

Five years ago, a clergyman of the Church of England, by birth and education an Italian Roman Catholic, was sent out to his native land to survey the field and report concerning the actual value of the promise then held out of a real reform movement. On the 28th of February, 1861, on motion of the Rev. Canon (now Archdeacon) Wordsworth, the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury sent up to the Upper House a petition, inviting the attention of the Archbishop and Bishops "to the opportunity now offered by Divine Providence for the advancement of true religion in Italy," expressing the opinion "that the Church of England ought not to remain passive and silent at so important a juncture;" and submitting to their consideration certain measures which seemed to them incumbent upon Convocation.

From that time the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Anglo-Continental Society—and to some extent the Venerable Society for the Propagation of the Gospel—have been engaged, under the patronage and with the counsel of some of the most influential of the English Bishops and divines, in showing their sympathy and extending aid to the primitive reformers. As local representatives, through whom this influence could be exerted, the Church of England has

chaplains at least in Florence, Milan, Naples, Genoa, Leghorn and Turin, who have, under the superintendence of their Diocesan, the Bishop of Gibralter, taken an active interest in the movement; while, perhaps, more important still, have been the services of some of her clergy, whose unofficial presence in Italy gave them a better opportunity of mingling with those priests and ecclesiastics who welcomed their sympathy and counsel.

And yet the American branch of the Church has thus far spoken no word of sympathy, held out no hand to encourage and strengthen them. To this statement the American Chaplaincy at Rome cannot, of course, be considered an exception; since Rome is not yet part of the Kingdom of Italy—no such reform movement has yet been suffered to show itself there—and the Rector of our Church in that city is, by the peculiarities of his position and the virtual obligations under which he enjoys the opportunity of holding service there, restrained from having any religious relations with the Papal subjects.

It is taken for granted that it will not be thought that this Church has been relieved of her responsibility by the activity and zeal of the American non-Episcopal denominations who have now been laboring for years in that field. *Their* efforts have been exclusively devoted to the work of detaching from the Church of Italy its reforming element, and of organizing new communions in direct antagonism to the old Church itself, as well as to its corruptions; whereas it is for the *internal* reformation of that Church, and, consequently, for the preservation and the strengthing in their filial work, of all those of her children who long to see her faith once more "spoken of throughout the whole world," that *we* should hope and pray. Moreover, *their* policy is essentially a foreign one, and therefore, a weak one among a people who have not forgotten that Italy was once the teacher of the nations and their guide in all that was noblest and most valuable in religious knowledge, as well as in literature, science, and art. Her sons do not now want foreign missionaries to introduce among them a foreign church; but they will welcome with warm hearts the loving and fraternal Christian counsel that seeks only to aid and strengthen them in restoring the purity and spiritual glory of their own.

Nor are the relations which English Churchmen have established with the Italian reformers sufficient for this end. The influence of the American branch of the Anglican Church would not merely be added to that of the English, but multiplied into it; since the unestablished position of our Church would at once prove to Italians the essentially spiritual char-

acter of Anglican Christianity, and her diverse nationality illustrate most forcibly the catholicity of a Church which is thus preaching the same gospel, perpetuating the same historic polity, and lifting up with one voice the prayers and praises of primitive ages, alike in a monarchy and in a republic, alike in the Old World and in the New.

Finally—as has already been stated—the assurance of earnest and anxious desire that the American Church would manifest an active sympathy in this blessed work which has for years repeatedly been expressed alike by those Italian and those English Churchmen who have most right to speak for their co-laborers, has lately been renewed more emphatically than ever; and your memorialist cannot withhold the expression of his own fervent hope that it will no longer be permitted to go disregarded.

But there is another phase of this subject which your memorialist is convinced cannot wholly have escaped the attention of those who look hopefully to the future of the Church of Italy, especially of those who regard this movement as perhaps only the advance of one which may eventually embrace other ancient Latin Churches of Europe.

The General Convention of this Church, at its last session, took a step of the first importance towards the reunion of Christendom in the direction of union with the Eastern or Greek Church. It is respectfully submitted to the Convention, whether a parallel step, holding out the fraternal hand to what may prove the reforming element, not of Italy alone, but possibly of Southern Europe, would not be a legitimate concomitant. In this connection it may not be amiss to state that a leading article in a late number of *L'Emancipatore Cattolico*, over the signature of the Rev. Dr. Prota himself, distinctly proposes an Ecumenical Council, embracing both Greek and Anglican Bishops, for the purpose of restoring the purity of the faith and the peace of Christendom.

Your memorialist does not presume to submit for your consideration any specific suggestions. He humbly prays that the Convention will be pleased to take such action upon the subject of this memorial as, in their wisdom, shall seem best calculated to promote the welfare of the Church, the glory of God, and the salvation of the souls of men; with the assurance of his reverence and esteem, begs leave to subscribe himself, Rt. Rev. Fathers, Rev. and Beloved Brethren, most respectfully your son and brother in the ministry and Church of Christ,

WM. CHAUNCY LANGDON.

St. John's Parish, Havre de Grace, Md., Oct. 2d, 1865.